

For discussion
on 11 March 2021

BOARD PAPER
AAB/3/2021-22

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE
ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD**

**DECLARATION OF
THREE HISTORIC BUILDINGS AS MONUMENTS**

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' advice on the proposal to declare the following three Grade 1 historic buildings as monuments under section 3(1) of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) (the "Ordinance"):

- (a) Bonham Road Government Primary School (般咸道官立小學) at No. 9A Bonham Road, Sai Ying Pun, Hong Kong;
- (b) Old Tai Po Police Station (舊大埔警署) at No. 11 Wan Tau Kok Lane, Tai Po, the New Territories; and
- (c) Hip Tin Temple (協天宮) at Shan Tsui (山咀), Sha Tau Kok, the New Territories.

HERITAGE VALUE

Bonham Road Government Primary School

2. The existing school premises of the Bonham Road Government Primary School were originally built in 1940 - 1941 to house the Northcote Training College (羅富國師範學院), the first full-time teacher training college in Hong Kong established in 1939. During the Japanese Occupation Period, the college was closed and the site was turned into the headquarters of the Japanese Military Police (the *Kempetai*).

3. The Northcote Training College was re-opened in March 1946 and then moved to its new campus on Sassoon Road in 1962. The Bonham Road campus was then used by the United College (聯合書院) of The Chinese University of

Hong Kong until it moved to Shatin in 1971. Following the renovation in 1973, the Bonham Road campus was returned to the Northcote College of Education (羅富國教育學院, renamed from the Northcote Training College in October 1967) and served as the college's sub-campus until its amalgamation into the Hong Kong Institute of Education and relocation to its new campus in Tai Po in October 1997. Since 25 January 2000, the campus has been home to the Bonham Road Government Primary School. The main building has been serving educational purposes since it was completed in 1941 and is also a rare surviving example of school premises that has served both primary and tertiary education.

4. The main building is a three-storey concrete structure from the ground to roof levels, while there is a basement floor underneath. It has an E-shaped plan, comprising a long centre portion and a wing on each end. The main building is a prominent example of Streamline Moderne buildings in Hong Kong, characterised by curves and horizontal lines and being functional with minimal ornamentation. It is worth noting that the air-raid shelters in the main building, which have left marks by the Japanese invasion, are of historic interest too, and are quite rare in the existing historic buildings in Hong Kong. The terrazzo finishes, timber doors and timber/ steel-framed windows together with their ironmongery, cement tiles with terrazzo finishes, timber floorboards and the spiral staircase are examples of historic building fabrics and materials, which are retained, in very good condition.

Old Tai Po Police Station

5. The Old Tai Po Police Station was built in 1899 as the first police station and the Police Headquarters in the New Territories, and is the oldest surviving police station in the New Territories. It stood on the hilltop of Wan Tau Kok Lane, the location of the first hoisting of British flag in the New Territories on 16 April 1899. The police station, therefore, was a symbolic representation of the establishment of British colonial rule in the New Territories. During the Japanese Occupation Period, the police station was left vacant, and its windows, doors, wooden floor and actually anything usable were looted by nearby residents. It resumed as police station after the occupation period until 1987. The site was then changed to house the Hong Kong Police Force New Territories North Regional Crime Prevention Office and used as temporary accommodation and offices for the Marine Police North Division. It was left vacant between 2006 and 2015, after which it has been revitalised into the Green Hub to promote conservation and sustainable living.

6. The Old Tai Po Police Station comprises three single-storey Utilitarian buildings, namely Main Building, Staff Quarters Block and Canteen Block. Spacious and flat lawn draws the three buildings together. The interior of the buildings is simple and functional befitting police operational requirements. The original architectural features have generally retained much of its original authentic appearance, such as the Dutch gables, ornamental window arches and window sills, cast iron drainpipe with hopper head and the fireplaces. The external features, such as the guard house and octagonal well near the entrance of the site, the flagpole and the two cannon rests at the front yard of Main Building, and the brick incinerator in the lawn remain in excellent condition. Most of the architectural features are still visible in the site despite internal refurbishment, alterations and additions made for operational requirements over the past 120 years.

Hip Tin Temple

7. Hip Tin Temple of Sha Tau Kok was rebuilt between 1894 and 1895 to replace an earlier temple also for the deity Kwan Tai (關帝), who was bestowed the title “Hip Tin” (協天) in the Ming dynasty. It is a temple of significant historical value to the economic development of the Sha Tau Kok area in the late nineteenth century, and is one of the few surviving main temples associated with the Tung Wo Market (東和墟) operated by the village alliance Shap Yeuk (十約), which dominated the economy of the Sha Tau Kok area for a century from the 1830s to 1930s. The temple’s rebuilding project was documented in minute details on five stone plaques in the front hall, which reflected the social network of the overseas Chinese community with the Sha Tau Kok area. Architecturally, the superbly crafted altar and fascia boards, the trefoil doorways of the front and rear halls, as well as the fine brick façade with granite door frame and plaster dragonfish corbels all remain intact.

8. The temple was used as the premises of a village school named Fuk Tak Study Hall (福德私塾) in the early twentieth century to provide education for the children of Shan Tsui. The temple has been used as a school again since 1959 as the then newly established Shan Tsui Public School (山咀公立學校) used part of the temple as the school office and classrooms. In 2015, the school reverted to the name of its pre-war predecessor at the temple and was renamed Fuk Tak Education Society Primary School (福德學社小學) and now no longer uses the temple for teaching purposes. Villagers of Shan Tsui still commemorate the Kwan Tai Festival on the thirteenth day of the fifth lunar month. The temple serves as an important historic landmark of the early development of Sha Tau

Kok and as a place to deliver religious, communal and educational functions for the local community in the last century.

9. Bonham Road Government Primary School and Old Tai Po Police Station are situated on government lands, whereas the Hip Tin Temple is situated on private lot under the ownership of Hip Tin Kung. The appraisals and photographs of the three historic items are at **Annexes A to F**.

GRADING AND DECLARATION

10. In recognition of the heritage value of the Bonham Road Government Primary School, Old Tai Po Police Station and Hip Tin Temple, the Board accorded Grade 1 status to them on 10 September 2020, 18 December 2009 and 16 April 2010 respectively.

11. At the meeting on 26 November 2008, the Board endorsed the establishment of formal relationship between the statutory monument declaration system and the administrative grading system for historic buildings. Under the endorsed arrangement, Grade 1 buildings, defined as “buildings of outstanding merit, which every effort should be made to preserve if possible”, will be included in a pool of highly valuable heritage buildings for consideration by the Antiquities Authority (i.e. the Secretary for Development) as to whether some of these may have reached the “high threshold” of monuments for statutory protection under the Ordinance.

12. The three historic buildings, i.e. the Bonham Road Government Primary School, Old Tai Po Police Station and Hip Tin Temple, as set out in paragraphs 2 to 9 above, have significant heritage value. They have reached the “high threshold” to be declared as monuments for permanent protection under the Ordinance. Consent for the proposed declaration has been obtained from the respective owner or management departments.

ADVICE SOUGHT

13. In accordance with section 3(1) of the Ordinance, the Antiquities Authority may, after consultation with the Board and with the approval of the Chief Executive, by notice in the Gazette, declare any historic building or structure to be a monument. Members’ advice on whether the Bonham Road Government Primary School, Old Tai Po Police Station and Hip Tin Temple

_____ should be declared as monuments is, therefore, sought. The intended monument boundaries of the declaration are shown in **Annex G**.

NEXT STEP

14. Subject to Members' endorsement of the proposal to declare the Bonham Road Government Primary School, Old Tai Po Police Station and Hip Tin Temple as monuments, the Antiquities and Monuments Office will take the matter forward in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
March 2021

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